AVENGERS

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS®

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR DOOM, MORTALS! FOR--

THE LION-GOD LIVES!

ALSO IN THIS ISH: THE END OF AN AVENGER!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

THE LION GOD LIVES!

BUT OF COURSE, MONSIEUR UMBALA. ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU ASKED TO SEE?

YES... YES! BUT I NEVER EXPECTED--

WAIT TILL I TURN THIS STORY INTO MY EDITOR! IF I HAD KNOWN IT WOULD BE THIS EASY TO FIND AN AFRICAN DEITY, I WOULD HAVE TRIED FOR A PULITZER PRIZE LONG AGO!

WHAT HAS THIS AFRICAN SCENE GOT TO DO WITH THE AVENGERS--? WAIT AND SEE, PILGRIM...

A TRIP INTO HIGH ADVENTURE AND THE FLAT-OUT WEIRD, WITH STEVE ENGLEHART author & DON HECK artist

ALONG WITH FRANK BOLLE, INKER / JOHN COSTANZA, LETTERER / PETRA GOLDBERG, COLORIST / ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

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DID YOU THINK THE GODS OF *AFRICA* WERE ANY *LONGER* GONE THAN THE GODS OF *ASGARD* OR *OLYMPUS*?

I NEVER GAVE IT MUCH THOUGHT AT *ALL*, N'LAKA--

PRES. III

-- BUT YOU CAN COUNT ME AMONG THE BELIEVERS, *NOW*.'

THAT IS *GOOD*, MONSIEUR--

-- BECAUSE NOW THAT THE LION GOD HAS *RETURNED* TO US-- WE NEED A *HUMAN SACRIFICE* TO *APPEASE* HIM!

HUMAN *SACRIFICE*? HA! THAT WENT OUT WITH THE *BOER WAR*--

WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT'S THE *JOKE*?

HEY, COME *ON*! THIS IS *STUPID*!

HEY!

NOOOO...

IT IS *FINISHED* IN AN INSTANT.

AND THEN-- *THEN* THE *LIVING SPIRIT* OF THE *LION LORD* GATHERS HIS OFFERING *TO* HIM...

YET ALL THIS TRANSPIRED FOUR DAYS AGO. NOW, LET US SWIFTLY SLIP AHEAD-- TO TODAY.

--A MOONLIGHT STROLL TO THE BAKLAVA STAND, TASH?

NOW, IRON MAN, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TONY STARK'S BODY-GUARD--

-- NOT HIS REPOSITORY FOR SNAPPY LINES TO USE ON HOMELESS YOUNG WOMEN!

HOMELESS... BECAUSE I WOULDN'T GO BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO WITH DAREDEVIL...

...BECAUSE HAWKEYE IS THERE ALREADY, AND I CAN'T FACE EITHER OF THEM BEFORE THINKING MY LIFE THROUGH.

THIS IS THE FAMOUS BLACK WIDOW, DARLING OF THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE AND INTER-NATIONAL PLAYGIRL?

OH, SHUSH, IRON MAN! WE DIDN'T MAKE MADAME NATASHA AN AVENGER JUST TO BRIGHTEN UP YOUR EVENINGS.

COME ON, TASHA-- JARVIS HAS YOUR ROOM READY, NOW.

YOU'RE ACTING MUCH MORE GIRLISH THESE DAYS THAN THE SCARLET WITCH I REMEMBER, WANDA.

WELL, I'M MUCH MORE IN LOVE THESE DAYS.

-- OR WAS MENTIONING IT A FAUX PAS?

NO, NO. DON'T MIND ME, PLEASE-- IT'S ALL RIGHT.

WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WOW! IT SURE BEATS THE YWCA!

MY PLACE ON THE COAST HARDLY LOOKS THIS NICE!

TONY STARK SPARED NO *EXPENSE* WHEN HE FIRST BUILT THIS TOWN-HOUSE--AND WAS EVEN *MORE* EXTRAVAGANT WHEN HE *REMODELED* IT FOR US.

BUT *MORE* THAN THAT, THE *PEOPLE* HERE ARE *GOOD* PEOPLE. YOU'LL *LIKE* BEING AN AVENGER.

THAT'S *TRUE*, WIDOW-- YOU *WILL*--

--IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY *OUTSIDE* PRESSURES ON YOU.

BUT THE *TELEGRAMS* I RECEIVE FROM MY AFRICAN *KINGDOM* GROW MORE AND MORE INSISTENT UPON MY *RETURN*...

...AND PERHAPS NOW THAT THE *BLACK WIDOW* HAS JOINED THIS TEAM, THE *BLACK PANTHER* SHALL *LEAVE*.

*AND PERHAPS THE EVENTS NOW SETTING THEMSELVES IN MOTION OUTSIDE THESE VERY WALLS SHALL DECIDE THE ISSUE *FOR* YOU, T'CHALLA.*

PAN-THER! PAN-THER!

BLACK ANTHER

WHAT THE HECK IS ALL THAT *RACKET*, THOR? THE *THANKS-GIVING PARADES* WERE *MONTHS* AGO.

COME SEE FOR *THYSELF*, CAPTAIN AMERICA. IT SEEMETH A *DEMONSTRATION.*

AGAINST *US?* WHY?

*I CAN HEAR THEM, AVENGER. THEY CALL FOR THE *PANTHER.*

BREAK THE *DOOR* DOWN! THE BLACK PANTHER SHALL AVOID HIS PEOPLE *NO LONGER!*

RIGHT *ON*, BRO'!

BAM!

WHATEVER YOU *SAY*, MR. UMBALA!

THERE HE IS! LET'S GET 'IM!
HOLD ON NOW! THERE'S NO NEED FOR DESTRUCTION!
I WAS JUST COMING TO TALK WITH YOU!
YEAH? HOW'RE YA GONNA TALK WITH LEAD IN YOUR TEETH, SELL-OUT?
WATCH OUT, T'CHALLA!
BBRRRAP!
=UHHHH!=
I DON'T LIKE YOUR MANNERS, MISTER!
PAK!
PANTHER GO HOME!
THAT'S TOO FREAKIN' BAD, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
I'LL HAVETA STRAIGHTEN YOUR HEAD OUT-- BY KNOCKIN' IT OFF!
ONLY IF YOU WANT THE SAME TREATMENT, FELLA!
OUTSIDE!
THEY CAN'T DO THIS TO US!
GIVE US THE PANTHER!
NO MORE HANGIN' OUT IN THE U.S. WHEN AFRICA NEEDS HIM! EITHER HE GOES HOME OR HE DIES!

THAT'LL BE *ENOUGH* TALK ABOUT *DYING!*

CRUD! THE WITCH'S GOT HER *HEX POWER* WORKIN'!

DON'T *HURT* ANY OF THEM, WANDA. I *STILL* OWE THEM A *TALK,* AND MAYBE WE CAN *WORK OUT* WHATEVER'S TROUBLING THEM.

BUT, AS T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA, KING IN HIS OWN RIGHT AND THUS USED TO NEGOTIATING, PADS FORWARD TO REASON WITH HIS ACCUSERS --

--HE FINDS THAT REASON IS NOT ON THEIR MINDS!

AND SO ABANDONS THAT TACTIC!

NOW I WANT *ANSWERS--* EITHER THE *HARD* WAY OR THE *EASY!* WHAT'S THIS ABOUT MY *SELLING OUT?*

DO NOT RAIL AGAINST THOSE WHO FOLLOW *ME,* PRINCE OF THE WAKANDAS!

I AM THE ONE YOU MUST *DEAL* WITH--I AM THE ONE YOU *YOURSELF* MUST FOLLOW!

THE BLACK PANTHER FOLLOWS *NO ONE,* MISTER! I WALK MY LIFE *ALONE,* AND I DO WHAT--WHAT--

--I HEAR... AND OBEY!

I RATHER THOUGHT YOU WOULD. I WOULD NOT HAVE BENT THESE PEOPLE'S WILLS TO MY OWN ENDS, HAD I NOT CAREFULLY CALCULATED THE OUTCOME.

NOW STAND ASIDE, CROWD! WE PASS!

T'CHALLA'S COMPLETELY UNDER THAT MAN'S SPELL!

ERGO, HE IS MORE THAN A MAN, CAP.

NO

MUCH MORE.

STOP WHERE YOU ARE, YOU! THE RIOTERS MAY BE WITH YOU-- AND EVEN THE PANTHER--

-- BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO GET PAST THE OTHER AVENGERS!

OH SO?

THEN LET US BEGIN-- FOR I HAVE MUCH WAITING TO BE DONE!

ODIN'S BLOOD! THE MORTAL DOTH VANISH AWAY--

--AND IN HIS STEAD DOTH RISE A DEMON!

NOT A DEMON, WHELP OF ASGARD-- NOT A DEMON, BUT RATHER ONE LIKE YOURSELF--

--A GOD!

THE LION GOD, IN TRUTH-- LIEGE TO THE KING OF BEASTS AND ALL WHO WORSHIP HIM--

--LORD OF THE VELDT AND THE VAST, CHURNING JUNGLE--

--A GOD!!

TAKE THEM, YOU WHO FOLLOW!

OUTTA SIGHT, MAN! WITH A GOD ON OUR SIDE, WE'LL CREAM THE PANTHER'S FRIENDS FROM HERE TO HOBOKEN!

DON'T MAKE US FIGHT YOU! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S USING YOU?

I CAN SEE WE'RE LOSIN' YOU, JIM!

YET, ONCE ALL ATTENTION HAS BEEN DIVERTED FROM THE DIABOLICAL DEITY--

HEY! WHAT'S THAT GLOW BEHIND US?

THAT IS YOUR FAST-TALKING PATRON TAKING THE WELL-KNOWN POWDER, GENTS--

-- LEAVING YOU IN THE LURCH, AND US UP A CREEK... AS HE UNDOUBTEDLY PLANNED.

BUT IRON MAN'S SARCASTIC DRAWL ALREADY FALLS ON UNCOMPREHENDING EARS, FOR, WITH THE VANISHED GOD FLED--

--SO, TOO, HAS VANISHED THE MOB'S AD HOC ANGER AND CAUSE...LEAVING ONLY BEWILDERMENT WITH THE MANY--

--AND FRUSTRATION IN THE FEW.

Go Home PANTHERS

THROUGH IT ALL, THE INCONSTANT **MOON** HAS SAILED **UNCARINGLY** OVERHEAD, SILENTLY OBSERVING...

...JUST AS, SIMULTANEOUSLY, IT WITNESSES **THIS** STRANGE TABLEAU, THOUSANDS OF MILES **AWAY.**

THEN THIS MAN--**HAWKEYE**--? HE HAS **LEFT** THE AVENGERS?

SO THEY **SAY,** DARLING. MY SOURCES TELL ME **CIRCUMSTANCES**-- AND HIS WOUNDED **PRIDE** CONSPIRED TO MAKE HIM FEEL **UNWANTED.**

HIS EGO IS A **FRAGILE** THING, I KNOW.

SUCH NEWS COMES AS **FOOD** TO A **STARVING** MAN! MANTIS FEELS HER **SOUL** ONCE AGAIN FULFILLED!

--AND MANTIS-- HAS LONG **MISSED** THAT FEELING.

COME, MY LOVE-- WE MUST **LEAVE** THIS PLACE, FOR **FATE** HAS GIVEN US THE MEANS--

--THROUGH WHICH **WE** SHALL JOIN THE AVENGERS' RANKS!

YES, MANTIS-- IT **MUST** BE! IT **MUST!**

DON'T TAKE ANY **BETS** THAT YOU'VE SEEN THE **LAST** OF THIS PERPLEXING PAIR, TRUE BELIEVER... EVEN THOUGH YOUR **NEXT** VIEW MUST BE NEXT **ISSUE,** BECAUSE THERE'S SO MUCH **STORY** LEFT IN **THIS** ONE. FOR EXAMPLE:

NOW, POSSESSOR OF THE PANTHER POWER-- **AWAKEN!**

THE WARY TILT TO YOUR **HEAD** SAYS YOU KNOW ME AS WELL IN **THIS** FORM AS IN MY GUISE AS A MORTAL **NEWSMAN.**

I **EXPECTED** THAT YOUR STUDIES IN THE WAYS OF THE **PANTHER** GOD WOULD NOT NEGLECT HIS SOLE **RIVAL!**

FOR ALL OF HISTORY, THE LION AND THE PANTHER HAVE WARRED IN AFRICA-- PITTING RAW POWER AGAINST AGILITY AND STEALTH! AND NOW THE PANTHER SEEMS TO HAVE WON.

I HAVE ALWAYS APPEARED WHEN SUMMONED, YET MY FOLLOWERS HAVE DWINDLED IN NUMBER--WHILE THE PANTHER GOD HAS NEVER APPEARED, AND STILL HIS DISCIPLES MULTIPLY! I SAY ENOUGH!

WITH THE SECRETS ONLY YOU KNOW-- BUT WILL SOON TELL ME-- I SHALL DESTROY THE PANTHER GOD'S PEOPLE--

--AND I SHALL REIGN SUPREME!

THE AMERICANS HAVE TAUGHT ME A PHRASE, LION LORD--

GO SPIT IN THE OCEAN.

HOWEVER, SINCE YOU HAVE SHOWN THAT YOU MAY STEAL MY MIND, WHY DO YOU NOT SIMPLY EMPTY IT OF ITS CONTENTS?

I COMMAND RESPECT, NOT SLAVISHNESS, T'CHALLA.

BUT DO NOT DELUDE YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE THWARTED ME!

THIS IS MY TOTEM-STICK... MOST POWERFUL OF ALL MY WEAPONS!

IF YOU DO NOT SPEAK, YOU WILL WATCH... AS I USE IT TO KILL YOUR FRIENDS!

AND THOSE FRIENDS ARE... WHO ELSE?

ALL RIGHT, GROUP-- THE AVENGERS HAVE FOUGHT GODS BEFORE, BUT AT LEAST WE KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. THIS TIME WE'RE LOST.

I'VE SENT CAP TO PICK THE BRAIN OF THE SHIELD RECORD TAPES, AND WHILE WE'RE WAITING, I'D LIKE TO PUMP OUR RESIDENT EXPERT ON GODS.

HOW ABOUT IT, GOLDI-LOCKS?

UNFORTUNATELY, IRON MAN, 'TIS NOT SO SIMPLE. THE SINGLE WORD "GOD" HATH MANY AND VARIED CONNOTATIONS.

WE ASGARDIANS BEAR THAT NAME... AND SO, TOO, THE WRITHING HORRORS WHICH CRAWL ACROSS OTHER DIMENSIONS IN MINDLESS DARKNESS.

E'EN LIMITING MYSELF TO THIS SPHERE, I REMAIN UNABLE TO GIVE YE MUCH AID.

ASGARD'S CONCERNS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE NORTHLANDS. WE LEARNED SOON ENOW OF FABLED OLYMPUS TO THE SOUTH...

...YET BEYOND THAT, WE TRADITIONALLY CARED SO LITTLE FOR MIDGARD* THAT FURTHER EXPLORATION WAS RARELY ATTEMPTED.

*EARTH. --ROY.

IF THIS LION LORD BE INDEED A GOD, HE AND I YET HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON. HE MAY BE--

IN OTHER WORDS, ALL WE HAVE IS WORDS -- AND NO PROGRESS,

WE'RE LISTENING, NATASHA.

WELL... I REALIZE I'M ONLY THE JUNIOR MEMBER OF THIS TEAM...

...BUT IT SEEMS TO ME WE SHOULD BE OUT SCOURING THE CITY, OR THE WORLD, OR WHATEVER YOU DO,

DAREDEVIL AND I HAVE FOUND THAT ACTION BREEDS REACTION FROM OUR ENEMIES.

WE KNOW NOT THAT THE LION GOD HATH ANY BURNING DESIRE TO CROSS US A SECOND TIME.

AND WE HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE TO HIS WHEREABOUTS, LADY. TAKE MY WORD FOR IT: SCOURING THE EARTH IS A DRAG.

I STILL DON'T LIKE PLAYING A WAITING GAME.

I AGREE.

WHAT IS THIS: GIRLS AGAINST BOYS? I SAY WE'LL WAIT FOR CAP--

KRAZZ!

IRON MAN! THE CEILING--!

BEHOLD THEIR **FACES**, BLACK PANTHER-- ENGRAVE **EACH** VISAGE **INDELIBLY** UPON YOUR MEMORY--

-- FOR THIS IS THE **LAST** MOMENT YOU WILL SEE THE AVENGERS **ALIVE**!!

WELL, LOOK **HERE**, GROUP-- IT'S THE OLD *BURNING-A-HOLE-IN-THE-ROOF* TRICK!

SINCE YOU WEAR THAT METALLIC **FACE PLATE**, I CANNOT SEE WHETHER YOU SPEAK FROM **BRAVERY**, **BRAVADO**, OR **BLUSTER**, ARMORED ONE!

WHICHEVER IT MAY BE, YOUR WORDS HAVE AT LEAST ATTRACTED MY **ATTENTION**-- SO BE AWARE THAT YOU **YOURSELF** HAVE **DOOMED** YOURSELF TO BE THE **FIRST** TO DIE!

I SAY THEE **NAY**, INTRUDER!

IF THOU DOST DESIRE A **CONFLICT**, LET IT RAGE 'GAINST ONE LIKE UNTO *THYSELF*:--

GOD AGAINST GOD!!

MYSTIC MJOLNIR SHALL BRING THE *DEFEAT* THOU DOST *DESERVE!*

NO, THOR! NOT WHILE I POSSESS ALL THE *SPEED* OF A LION COMBINED WITH THE *SKILL* OF A DEITY!

AND BEFORE YOUR HAMMER CAN *RETURN* TO YOU, ASGARDIAN, I CALL UPON *MY* SACRED WEAPON--

--TO PROVE THAT THE MIGHT OF *ONE* GOD MAY EASILY FELL *ANOTHER!*

THOR'S *DOWN,* BUT THE ONLY *IMPORTANT* BATTLE IS THE *FINAL* ONE!

ARE YOU *MAD?* HOW CAN YOU *DARE* TO ATTACK ME AFTER WITNESSING MY AWESOME *POWER?*

MY TOTEM-STICK WILL BLAST YOUR ATOMS TO THE FARTHEST REACHES -- EH?

ONLY IF IT TOUCHES MY ATOMS, LION GOD, AND I HAVE MENTALLY RENDERED THEIR DENSITY TOO LOW TO BE TANGIBLE!

-- EXCEPT FOR MY HAND, WHICH I CAN NOW SOLIDIFY JUST ENOUGH TO BRING YOU PAIN AND OBLIVION!

WAIT! YOU STIFFEN -- BUT YOUR EYES STILL RETAIN SENTIENCE --

BECAUSE I ANTICIPATED YOU, ANDROID! ALTHOUGH IT HAD ALTERED TO ASSUME MY FORM, IT IS ONLY MY MORTAL HOST-BODY YOU OVERCAME!

YOU CAN PHYSICALLY AFFECT THAT HUMAN SHELL, BUT NOT THE SPIRIT OF A GOD!

I, HOWEVER, NOW HAVE YOUR TANGIBLE HAND TO AFFECT --

--AND THE OBLIVION YOU SPOKE OF IS YOURS!

AND NEXT, A WOMAN LEAPS TO BATTLE-- BUT SUCH A CONTEST IS NOT THE WAY OF THE LION LORD!

THUNK!

IN PREFERENCE, I LET MY SAVAGE JUNGLE BEASTS ENGAGE THE FEMALE, WHILE I FACE WARRIORS!

I'M GLAD I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR TRIBES-PEOPLE, FRIEND!

SERVING A MALE CHAUVINIST GOD WOULD GET ME DOWN IN A HURRY!

RRRRARR

AT ANY RATE, YOU SHOULD KNOW IT'S THE LADY LION THAT'S THE MOST DANGEROUS--

RROARRR

--AND IF I CAN CLING TO THIS WALL LONG ENOUGH--

I'LL USE MY WIDOW'S LINE TO PULL HER HIGHNESS INTO HER MATE AND PROVE IT TO YOU!

RRA

RRRRRRR

LIKE I THOUGHT: THEY'LL DEFEND THEMSELVES FROM A SEEMING ATTACK BEFORE CHASING PREY!

BEAUTIFULLY DONE, BEAUTFUL!

WANDA, TRY TO REVIVE THOR AND THE VISION! WE MAY NEED THEM!

BUT DON'T FORGET WE NEED YOU TOO!

I'M NOT A CHILD, IRON MAN!

BEING IN *LOVE* WON'T MAKE ME OVERLOOK MY *RESPONSIBILITIES*--

--OR MY *MUTANT ABILITY!*

FWAM!

THAT *DRAINED* ME, BUT I'VE DONE ALL I *CAN!*

BUT THE *VISION*-- HE'S SO *STILL*--!

AH, WANDA... IF ONLY YOU HAD BEEN MORE CONCERNED WITH THE FIGHT THAN YOUR MAN --FOR THEN YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TURNED BACK TO HIM SO QUICKLY...

ANOTHER LION-- CROUCHING FOR THE *ATTACK!* WANDA'S IN *DANGER*--

--BUT *NOW* IS THE MOMENT FOR THE *BLACK PANTHER* TO MAKE HIS MOVE!

THE LION LORD SHOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT A CAPTIVE *AVENGER* TO AVENGER'S *MANSION*--

--WHERE WE HAVE OUR *MACHINES!*

ZOT!

NOW, WHETHER WE *STAND* OR *FALL*-- I SHALL HAVE BEEN A *PART* OF THE AVENGERS' DEFENSE!

RRRAAR

OH MY LORD--!

T'CHALLA!

HO, KING OF THE JUNGLE-- TRY YOUR *CLAWS* AGAINST *ANOTHER* JUNGLE-BORN!

YOUR PATRON *SPIRIT* SAID THAT PANTHERS FOUGHT ONLY WITH *CUNNING*, UNABLE TO MATCH YOUR *STRENGTH*--

RRAGH!

--BUT THE *TRUTH* IS NOT SO *SIMPLISTIC!*

RRRRRR

I AM ONLY A MAN, BUT I KNOW THE SECRETS OF THE *PANTHER GOD*--

--AND THOUGH *FEW* MEN MAY TRIUMPH OVER A FULL-GROWN *LION* IN A CONTEST OF NAKED STRENGTH--

--THE *BLACK PANTHER* HAS TRIUMPHED OVER *YOU!*

THAT WAS *MARVELOUS*, IRON MAN! IF YOU HADN'T FINISHED THOSE BEASTS *OFF*, I'D HAVE HAD TO SPEND THE *REST OF MY LIFE* ON THIS WALL!

KEEP *GOING*-- I *LOVE* EGO-BOO...

...BUT WE HAVEN'T EVEN *TOUCHED* THE *BIG* CHEESE AS YET.

AND MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM...

IRON MAN!

PUNY, PALE MORTALS! I HAVE DELAYED LONG ENOUGH, AND IT HAS COST ME!

IN PLACE OF BREAKING T'CHALLA, I HAVE PROVIDED A MEANS FOR THE REAFFIRMATION OF HIS SELF-ESTEEM!

FOOM!

THIS GOD WILL NOT BE MOCKED!

I WILL SACRIFICE YOU ALL!

I WILL LEVEL THIS MANSION AND ALL WITHIN IT! I WILL LEVEL THE WORLD!

HE'S RAGING WITH A FURY ONLY A GOD COULD FEEL!

NO HUMAN I'VE EVER MET SEEMED MORE INTENSELY BERSERK THAN THE LION LORD!

I CAN'T STOP HIM-- EVEN THOUGH I THINK HE'S KILLED ALL THE OTHERS!

I CAN'T STOP HIM!!

YET WHAT IS THIS? MOVEMENT... FROM AN UNEXPECTED SOURCE?

I BE... ALIVE!

THE POWER OF YON IMMORTAL BE NOT ENOUGH TO SLAY ME!

THEN THE GOD OF THUNDER MUST NEEDS TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF HIS SECOND CHANCE!

I CALL UPON THE POWERS THAT BE MINE--

--TO CREATE THE THUNDER!

AYE, AND THE LIGHTNING!

MOST ESPECIALLY THE LIGHTNING!

LET THE ELEMENTS CLASH AND SWAY, SPEARING THE PROTESTING SKY--

--AND STRIKE!!

AAAAAAAAAAA...

THIS ELEMENTAL POWER OF *NATURE*, COURSING BLINDLY THROUGH HIS *TOTEM-STICK*-- AND SO THROUGH HIS *FORM*...

...IT HATH *DESTROYED* THE LION LORD, AS HE DID STRIVE TO DESTROY *US!*

BEHIND THEM, THEN, RISES A GROAN... AND FROM ANOTHER CORNER, A SIGH... AS FIRST ONE AVENGER AND THEN ANOTHER AND ANOTHER RETURNS TO CONSCIOUSNESS FROM WHATEVER DARK LAND THE AFRICAN DEITY HAD DISPATCHED THEM.

AND SOON...

THOR, HOW DID YOU KNOW *BLASTING* THE GOD WOULD UNDO HIS *MAGIC?*

IN TRUTH, T'CHALLA, I KNEW *NO* SUCH THING.

I ACTED TO PRESERVE THY AND MY *LIVES*, IN THE SOLE MANNER *LEFT* TO ME.

I COULD BUT *HOPE* IT WOULD AID THE OTHERS.

THAT WAS A GREAT OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE *YOU* PUT ON, WIDOW! YOU'RE GOING TO FIT IN REAL *WELL* AROUND HERE!

IRON MAN-- *ALL* OF YOU-- LISTEN...

I'VE *ENJOYED* THIS-- I REALLY HAVE-- BUT BEING WITH YOU HAS *TAUGHT* ME A FEW THINGS.

FIRST: I THINK I'M TOO MUCH MY *OWN WOMAN* TO FEEL ENTIRELY *COMFORTABLE* WORKING WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE. I'M MORE A *DO-IT-YOURSELF* TYPE.

--AND *SECOND*: ONCE YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR *HEART* LIES, YOU HAVE TO *FOLLOW* IT.

SEEING *WANDA* RUN TO THE *VISION* SETTLED MY DOUBTS.

IF YOU TRULY *NEED* ME, I'LL STAY... BUT I'D *RATHER* GO BACK TO WORKING WITH *ONE* MAN-- A *MAN* I CAN UNDERSTAND--

--*DAREDEVIL!*

GO, TASHA-- WITH OUR *BLESSINGS.*

WE ONLY *RECRUITED* YOU AND HIM TO HELP US AGAINST *MAGNETO*... AND THAT NEED NO LONGER *EXISTS.*

BESIDES, *I* HAVE SETTLED MY DOUBTS TODAY AS *WELL*. EVIL MAY ORIGINATE *ANYWHERE* --AND *STRIKE* ANYWHERE.

I CANNOT *LIMIT* MYSELF *SOLELY* TO MY AFRICAN KINGDOM. IF I AM TO FIGHT EVIL, I MUST BE ABLE TO FIGHT IT ON *ANY* PART OF THE GLOBE!

THAT IS WHY-- THE *BLACK PANTHER* WILL *REMAIN* AN AVENGER!

AS YOU DESIRE IT, T'CHALLA.

A GOD CANNOT DIE BY FORCE-- AND SOON, WHEN I HAVE RECOVERED MY POWER, I SHALL RETURN FOR YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE.

HIGH ABOVE, INVISIBLE IN HIS SUPERNATURAL MAJESTY--

THE LION GOD LAUGHS!

NEXT: YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL

SLAY VISIONS!